



# *News Release*

**PRESS OFFICE/LOS ANGELES**

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## ***Earth Island<sup>®</sup> Expands with SBA 504 Loan 100 Day Milestone for American Reinvestment and Recovery Act***

**(LOS ANGELES, CALIF.)** – The U.S. Small Business Administration will present a local food manufacturing company today with a \$885,000 check to buy a nearby building to expand its operations. The financing was provided by two local lenders and is being enhanced by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009.

Earth Island,<sup>®</sup> a solar-powered production facility founded in 1988 by two entrepreneurial friends Robert Goldberg and Paul Lewin to produce a unique line of vegetarian products, will receive financing through SBA's 504 Loan Program. Many of the fees associated with the loan were eliminated through the Recovery Act, which saved Earth Island \$21,937. **A press conference and check presentation will be followed by proclamations from local elected officials and a tour of the facilities at 9201 Owensmouth Avenue, Chatsworth, CA 91311.**

May 28th marks the 100th day the Recovery Act has been assisting small businesses across the country through loan fee reductions, higher guarantees, new SBA programs, and secondary market incentives that are unlocking credit markets and creating an economic turn around for the nation's small businesses. In the past month, SBA loan volume has increased 25%.

The initial impetus behind the company's food products was the personal vegetarian beliefs of the owners who chose not to sell meat, poultry or fish at their related facility, a restaurant and cafe called Follow Your Heart<sup>®</sup> located in Canoga Park, which features their best selling product, Vegenaize<sup>™</sup> an egg-free, dairy-free sandwich spread. This feature is recognized by many as something which makes their shopping experience all the more pleasurable. Earth Island only uses fresh and natural ingredients to make their wholesome line of salad dressings and dairy-free cheese also found in stores such as Whole Foods and Trader Joe's.

"Earth Island and Follow Your Heart have come to the SBA a number of times for assistance in expanding our businesses, and they have always provided the capital we

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needed at terms we could afford,” said Robert Goldberg, chief executive officer and co-founder of Earth Island. “The continuous growth we have experienced over nearly four decades has been, to a great degree, the result of the financial support given to us by the Small Business Administration.” This will be the company’s third SBA loan.

Celebrities such as Oprah (on her website) and Kym Douglas (while on the Ellen Degeneres Show) have featured Earth Island’s healthy, natural and meat free products, which include a line of Vegan Gourmet<sup>®</sup> cheese alternatives.

“SBA is looking forward to seeing more of Earth Island’s products on store shelves,” said Alberto G. Alvarado, Los Angeles SBA district director. “We are also pleased that Earth Island and their lenders CDC Small Business Finance and California Bank & Trust took advantage of the Recovery Act incentives and invested in these new facilities, which will lead to job creation.”

The CDC (certified development company) facilitated the SBA 504 loan. Currently, the 504 Loan Program has historic low interest rates. Compared to a regular commercial real estate loan, a business owner utilizing the SBA 504 Loan Program can purchase commercial property for just 10 percent down.

“President Obama’s stimulus package is loaded with fee reductions and higher lending limits for energy-efficient businesses such as Earth Island,” said “Sam” Tuyen Sam, senior commercial loan officer at CDC Small Business Finance.

The owners’ new operation is located near their existing building and will be used for shipping and receiving, allowing them to expand the existing facility for the packaging and processing of their food products and allow for a larger space for their staff.

“More importantly, this loan is enabling Earth Island to expand its business operations and ease sales growth issues while creating new jobs in the local economy,” said Lan Ward, senior vice president of California Bank & Trust.

“With the anticipated growth in the health food market and Earth Island’s new facilities there is a palpable feeling that the future continues to be bright with these Recovery Act tools in the hands of our nation’s skillful and persistent small business owners,” said Alvarado.

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